

**CITY OF MILPITAS
APPROVED**

PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

August 9, 2006

- I.
PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE**
- Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II.
ROLL CALL**
- Present: Ali-Santosa, Ciardella, Galang, Mandal, Tabladillo and Williams
Absent: Azevedo
Staff: Bejines, Williams and Whitecar
- III.
PUBLIC FORUM**
- Chair Williams invited members of the audience to address the Commission on any topic not on the agenda, noting that no response is required from the staff or Commission, but that the Commission may choose to agendize the matter for a future meeting.
- There were no speakers from the audience.
- IV.
APPROVAL OF MINUTES
July 26, 2006**
- Chair Williams called for approval of the minutes of the Planning Commission meeting of July 26, 2006.
- Staff had no changes to the minutes.
- Motion** to approve the July 26, 2006 minutes
- M/S: Galang/Mandal
- AYES: 5
- NOES: 0
- ABSTENTIONS: 1 (Ciardella)
- V.
ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- There were no staff announcements.
- VI.
CONFLICT
OF INTEREST**
- Chair Williams asked if the Commission has any personal or financial conflict of interest on tonight's agenda.
- There were no Commissioners that identified a conflict of interest.
- VII.
APPROVAL OF
AGENDA**
- Chair Williams called for approval of the agenda.
- Tom Williams, Planning and Neighborhood Services Director**, noted that staff is requesting that agenda Item No. 3 (Pre-Zone No. P-ZC2006-3) be removed from the agenda because action had already been taken back in 1993 and no further action is necessary.
- Motion** to approve the agenda with staff's changes.
- M/S: Galang/Mandal
- AYES: 6
- NOES: 0
- VIII.
CONSENT CALENDAR
None**
- Chair Williams asked whether staff, the Commission, or anyone in the audience wished to remove or add any items to the consent calendar.
- There were no items on the consent calendar.

IX. PUBLIC HEARING

1. UPDATE ON CITY BANNER PROGRAM AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Diana Whitecar, Economic Development Manager, presented an update on the City's banner program and economic development activities. She noted that no action was necessary and recommended note receipt and file.

Commissioner Tabladillo asked when will the banners be ready and Ms. Whitecar said they will be ready the beginning of January 2007.

Chair Williams asked if staff reviewed the artistic signs in Newark that give recognition to the City of Newark and Ms. Whitecar said she would take a look.

Chair Williams recalled that a few years ago, the Commission worked hard to create gateways signs in the City and the only one that was erected was on Tasman. He felt that the sign is nice but doesn't really demonstrate what Milpitas is all about. He said the other sign on Main street is an old western sign and those are the only two prominent signs Milpitas really has. He felt that Milpitas needs to get more recognition. He asked if the Economic Development Commission (EDC) could put bigger lettering on the words Milpitas on the Gateway sign on Tasman. He would like to see all of the commissions promote the City and take pride and felt the banners are a good start.

Commissioner Tabladillo asked how do the banners tie into the branding concept and felt the colors fonts and imagery should be tied in with a marketing concept.

Ms. Whitecar said the EDC originally wanted to have a new gateway sign on Dixon Land Road however the price escalated to \$800,000. The banners plan to be up at the City's gateway entrances from 18 to 24 months and by that time the EDC should have the branding concept down. The same color scheme would probably not apply however the City is a diverse community and people will be ready to take note of the banners.

Commissioner Tabladillo asked if the EDC will be utilizing stakeholders for their marketing. Ms. Whitecar said that the EDC has an image subcommittee that would take the banners out to other investments and Commissioner Tabladillo said it would be great to incorporate bigger corporations.

Commissioner Tabladillo asked if the Great Mall signs will be changed off I-880. Ms. Whitecar said that she met with the Great Mall manager and he agrees that the signs do not convey what Great Mall is about and is willing to meet with staff to discuss this further.

Chair Williams asked who owns the freeway signs and Ms. Whitecar said the Great Mall.

Commissioner Mandal said that the EDC is doing a fantastic job. He noted how Asian cities promote their cities by saying they have a low crime rate and their cities are very clean and how they have a lot of incentives. He recommended that the EDC try to emphasize these types of qualities for the City of Milpitas.

Commissioner Ciardella recalled that back in the late 80's, the Community Advisory Commission (CAC) made the comment to Council that there should be a monument sign at the entrance of the City and asked if there is a chance that it could be done this time. Ms. Whitecar said she is committed to it however her first priority is putting the banners up.

Ms. Whitecar pointed out that it is very important to have the minute man on some logos and also the City logo and Commissioner Ciardella agreed. Ms. Whitecar also said that the Arts Commission is thinking about using directional signage as pieces of art and that she will be coordinating with them.

Commissioner Ali-Santosa said that the banners are a great idea however it looks like the EDC is focusing only on the freeway area. He suggested that the banners be placed near bus stops and the light rail for more exposure.

Ms. Whitecar explained that the City budgeted for 110 new banner locations and there are a lot of banners that will be placed on Main Street already. She agreed with Commissioner Ali-Santosa about putting the banners near the bus stops however that would have to be at a future date.

Commissioner Ali-Santosa asked if the Milpitas lettering design could be changed so that it is easier to read and Ms. Whitecar said that they will have to test the banners out first to at least four poles and will have full scale mockups.

Chair Williams suggested putting banners near Elmwood Jail so that the people riding on light rail are distracted by the bright colors and not the jail itself.

Mr. Williams commented that Ms. Whitecar, in her presentation, said that merger of the redevelopment project area and Great mall, coming forward to the Commission in September, will be instrumental in relocating the Great Mall signs and integrating the Great Mall advertising with Piercey Toyota and other businesses that desire to have freeway advertising. The reason is the California Outdoor Advertising Act prohibits cities and private companies from signage within 600 feet of an interstate or state highway unless it is in a redevelopment area or on private property so in this instance, staff thought it would be prudent to merge the redevelopment project area and Great Mall.

Vice Chair Galang asked if the City is responsible for putting a sign at the very start of Country Club drive and Ms. Whitecar said staff could look into that.

Vice Chair Galang asked if the City plans to put signs near the historical Adobe park. Ms. Whitecar said she can bring that up to the EDC.

Vice Chair Galang asked what type of material is the banner made of and Ms. Whitecar said acrylic vinyl and it has a four to five year life span. The EDC picked vinyl because it is a sharper color and thinks the quality would be good.

Commissioner Tabladillo asked about the placement of the proposed banner location on the northside of Dixon Landing Road and Milpitas Blvd. Ms. Whitecar said that there is a graphic that is missing on the map that she is aware of and she will add it.

Chair Williams said the item was Note receipt and file.

2. STATUS REPORT ON CITYWIDE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

Tom Williams, Planning and Neighborhood Services Director, presented a status report on Citywide Development Activity and noted that no action is necessary and recommended note receipt and file.

Chair Williams asked what is the status of Apton Plaza. Mr. Williams said Apton Plaza had contaminated soils and they had to do environmental cleanup and will hopefully be ready to break ground in the fall. There were also final design issues that needed to be worked out and the project is moving along.

Chair Williams asked about the Main St. divider on Montague Expressway. Mr. Williams said that as projects are developed, each time a developer comes in they are dedicating the roadway as part of their projects, streets and roadways. The challenge with infill development is that it is a pay as you go, so once the City is financially healthy, then it may consider to improve the infrastructure.

Chair Williams recalled that one of the conditions of the Midtown Plan was to allow for merging of properties on Main Street. He said there is an abandoned nursery near the Hetch Hetchy and asked if the owners are thinking of bringing back the nursery.

Mr. Williams said that the nursery is located in the older portion of Main Street and it is a very difficult area because there are a lot of small lots with different owners. Planning has been working with the EDC and Downtown Association to work on the Precise plan where Serra and Main Street intersect. The Precise plan is a challenge to get it large enough to be a marketable development. There are private and public investments and Calaveras is a barrier to having a conducive Main street but it is not a constraint to have a compact core, because the area is still walkable to the library and the County Health center. He felt that it would be between five to ten years before seeing any activity on Main Street while the ground work continues to be laid.

Chair Williams said he was part of the Midtown Plan Subcommittee and their vision was that area was the first place where the changes were going to take place. He understands it is very difficult to deal with separate property owners. He said that area would be good to maybe add some other smaller mixed uses like a shotgun style warehouse, or loft type of buildings over retail.

Chair Williams said that he hopes the Council will get a copy of the major development project map and Mr. Williams said the map is maintained twice a year and is on the City's website.

Commissioner Mandal said that he enjoyed the map and presentation because the map looks at the big picture of where things are going and will be a great tool for when a project comes in.

Mr. Williams said that the rhythm and the form of the street are important to the City's image. All the trees on Main Street are sycamore trees and once the two rows of sycamore trees are planted, Main Street will be a beautiful grand Boulevard. His main concern is when the buildings are built. It has to be of high quality architecture and urban design.

Commissioner Ali-Santosa asked how does the City plan on handling the energy demand given the numbers of housing units coming down the pipeline.

Mr. Williams said he is working on a presentation to bring back to the Commission in September on the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program. It is a program about green buildings and providing incentives for recyclable material and also PG&E rate reductions.

Commissioner Ciardella asked if there will be another location for the automotive repair shops on Main Street. Mr. Williams said that the City has a huge vacancy rate in the industrial area and there are viable areas for the automotive industry to relocate.

Commissioner Ciardella said there should be a good reason for patrons to visit downtown. He visited Memphis and they have a trolley system. He asked if the City would consider the same thing.

Mr. Williams said that staff would not consider it at this time however it is food for thought. He noted how Redwood City recently opened a new Century Theater and San Mateo opened a theater a few years ago. Cities have been using theaters as a catalyst for going downtown. He felt that what will make people go down to Main Street is that they will live there. In the future, there will be a mixed use of housing and retail shops, maybe even an art center. The City's goal is to continue to integrate existing businesses with new businesses, and provide a better utilization of land and buildings.

Commissioner Ciardella asked when is the streetscape going to be installed. Mr. Williams that that Public Works is currently moving forward with the lights and trees but as far as everything else, he will have to get back to the Commission. He estimates about two to three years out. He pointed out that there are 33 owners in 12 acres of land and once staff gets through that, it should be easier.

Vice Chair Galang asked when will the townhouses be built in the Town Center and Mr. Williams said that staff just approved the final map for the townhouse project and will be breaking ground in the spring of 2007, after the Safeway is built.

Vice Chair Galang suggested that on the major project improvement list, staff add a section titled anticipated completion date and Mr. Williams agreed.

Commissioner Mandal expanded on what Commissioner Ali-Santosa said about energy in general and when projects come forward, and asked if staff encourages them to be more energy efficient. For example, some San Jose buildings are green buildings and use little power from PG&E. He asked how is staff going to look at alternative sources of energy.

Mr. Williams said that staff doesn't have anything right now that encourages green building types of design however he will be looking at the LEED program for future direction.

Chair Williams said the item was Note receipt and file.

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m. to the next regular meeting of August 23, 2006.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tom Williams
Planning and Neighborhood Services
Director

Veronica Bejines
Recording Secretary